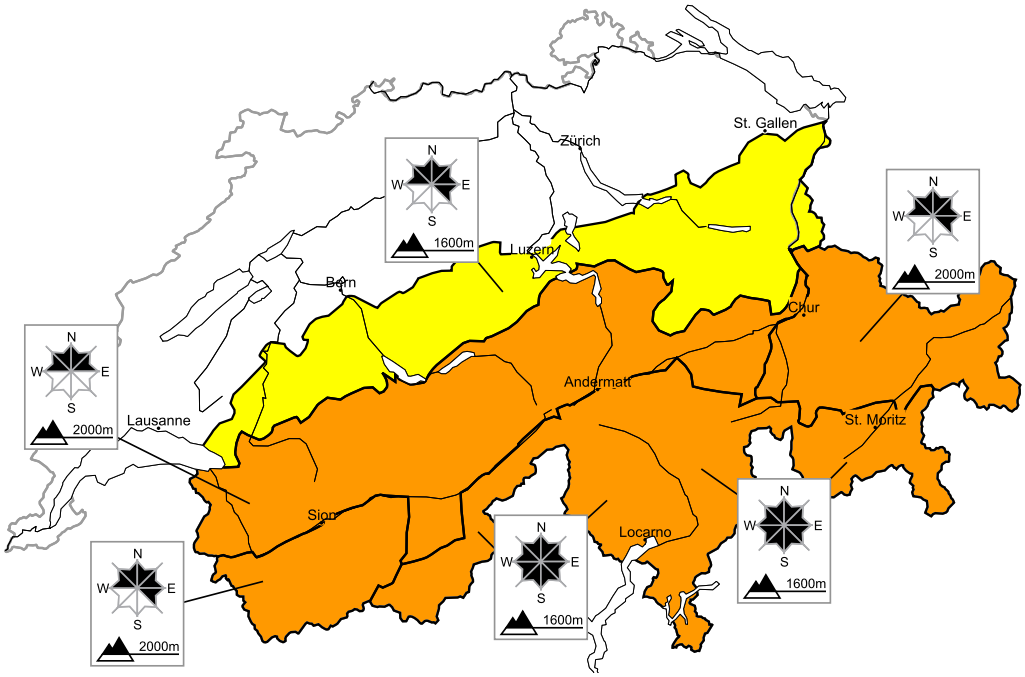
Considerable avalanche danger will be encountered over a wide area

Edition: 19.1.2014, 08:00 / Next update: 19.1.2014, 17:00

Avalanche danger

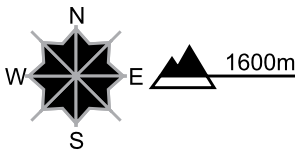
updated on 19.1.2014, 08:00



Region A — Level 3, considerable

Fresh snow and snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

As a consequence of fresh snow and strong wind extensive snow drift accumulations will form, in particular at high altitudes and in high Alpine regions. These can be released by a single winter sport participant. Small and medium-sized natural avalanches are to be expected, especially on the southern flank of the Alps. Exposed parts of transportation routes can be endangered. Off-piste activities call for extensive experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and great restraint.

Wet and full-depth avalanches

On cut and grassy slopes more frequent small avalanches are possible. Natural wet avalanches are to be expected as the snowfall level rises, especially below approximately 1800 m in central Ticino and Sotto Ceneri.

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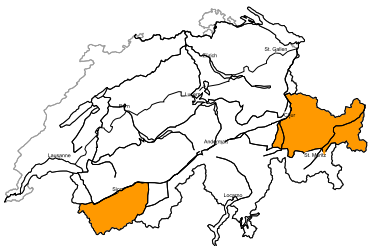
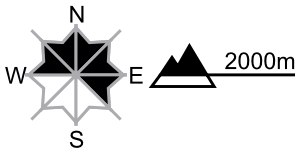
Region B — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts, old snow

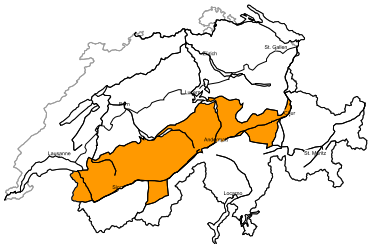
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

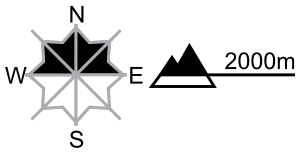
The fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations can in some cases be released easily. They are to be bypassed as far as possible. Additionally avalanches can penetrate near-ground layers of the snowpack, especially on north facing slopes. These avalanche prone locations are difficult to recognise. Backcountry touring and other off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and caution.

Region C — Level 3, considerable



Snow drifts

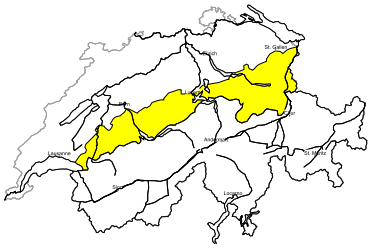
Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

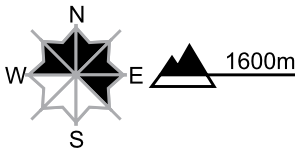
As a consequence of the sometimes strong wind avalanche prone snow drift accumulations have formed. Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations can be released by a single winter sport participant. Mostly avalanches are rather small. Off-piste activities call for experience in the assessment of avalanche danger and careful route selection.

Region D — Level 2, moderate



Snow drifts

Avalanche prone locations



Danger description

Fresh and somewhat older snow drift accumulations represent the main danger. These are to be found in particular in gullies and bowls, and behind abrupt changes in the terrain. Avalanches can be released in particular at transitions from a shallow to a deep snowpack. At elevated altitudes the prevalence of avalanche prone locations will increase. Careful route selection is required.

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Snowpack and weather

updated on 18.1.2014, 17:00

Snowpack

Wide ranging snowdrift accumulations are forming in the high altitude regions of the Main Alpine Ridge and on the southern flank of the Alps in particular as a result of snowfall and winds. They have been deposited on top of a loosely packed surface and are prone to triggering. Especially on the southern flank of the Alps, naturally triggered avalanches can in some places sweep away the loosely packed snows of recent days. The avalanche corridors as far as intermediate altitudes are generally filled with snow.
In central Valais, in southern Lower Valais, in northern and central Grisons, in the Lower Engadine and in Val Müstair the layering of the old snowpack is unfavourable. Avalanches in those regions, on north facing slopes in particular, can sweep away the snow cover down to the lowermost layers. In the other regions of the Swiss Alps avalanches down to more deeply embedded layers of the snowpack are unlikely.

Observed weather on Saturday, 18.1.2014

Last night skies in southern regions were overcast, elsewhere predominantly clear. During the day today it was quite sunny, especially in the eastern sector of the northern flank of the Alps and in northern Grisons; elsewhere it was heavily overcast to an increasing extent everywhere in the Swiss Alps. On the southern flank of the Alps above 500 to 1000 m, snowfall set in.

Fresh snow
On the southern flank of the Alps above approximately 1000 m, 5 to 10 cm; elsewhere it generally remained dry.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m in northern regions, 0 °C and in southern regions, -3 °C

Wind
At high altitudes as well as in foehn exposed regions of the north, moderate to strong southerly winds, elsewhere winds were at light to moderate velocity.

Weather forecast through Sunday, 19.1.2014

In northern regions, skies will be heavily overcast in general, but it will remain dry. In southern regions, snowfall is anticipated which will be heavy during the night and tomorrow morning. The snowfall level on the southern flank of the Alps will intermittently drop down to low lying areas. In the remaining regions, it will be at approximately 1500 m, in Sotto Ceneri for a brief time at 1800 m.

Fresh snow
Between Saturday evening and Sunday evening, the following amounts of new fallen snow are anticipated:
· southern flank of the Alps not including Val Müstair, 20 to 40 cm; from place to place, and particularly in Sotto Ceneri, as much as 50 cm
· remaining regions of the Main Alpine Ridge from the Matterhorn into Val Müstair, 10 to 20 cm
Further to the north the amounts of snowfall will be noticeably less. In furthermost northern regions it will remain dry.

Temperature
At midday at 2000 m in northern regions, 2 °C and in southern regions, -1 °C

Wind
Moderate southerly winds; at high altitudes and in the foehn-exposed regions winds will be blowing at strong velocity.

Outlook through Tuesday, 21.1.2014

On Monday skies will be heavily overcast in general. Snowfall over widespread areas is expected above approximately 1000 m. On Tuesday it will be partly sunny in southern regions. In northern regions there will be intermittent snowfall. The avalanche danger is expected to gradually diminish in southern regions; in northern regions no significant change is expected.